

## ECA Update: October 6, 2015



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*ECA Staff*

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*Albuquerque Journal*

**Register Online: 2015 Intergovernmental Meeting in New Orleans, LA**

*ECA Staff*

The Intergovernmental meeting is scheduled to take place in **New Orleans** at the [Hotel Monteleone](#) **November 18-20, 2015** (Wednesday – Friday).

ECA will be having a stand-alone board meeting on **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 11 AM – 2 PM** at the **Hotel Monteleone** as part of the 2015 Intergovernmental Meeting.

A reception at the hotel is also currently scheduled for the night of Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>.

As a reminder, registration for the 2015 Intergovernmental Meeting is now available online at:  
<http://www.cvent.com/d/hrq66w>.

ECA will reimburse members for 3 nights of hotel, up to **\$750** in airfare, and transportation to and from the airport. Please contact ECA if your airfare exceeds **\$750** for pre-approval or ECA will only reimburse up to **\$750**. ECA will not reimburse for parking at airport, rental cars, per diem, registration, or any other expenses. We encourage you to book your flights in advance. ECA will not reimburse for additional flight expenses for flights booked within two weeks of the meeting.

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### Events of Interest

[Plutonium Disposition and the MOX Project](#)  
October 7

[Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#)  
October 7

[Victoria Wassmer Confirmation Hearing to be DOE Under Secretary](#)  
October 20

[2015 Intergovernmental](#)

Additional updates will be sent as they become available.

**Congressman Conaway Files Interim Consolidated Storage Act of 2015**

*The Rod Report*

October 5, 2015

[LINK](#)

Congressman Mike Conaway (R-TX) has filed H.R 3643, Interim Consolidated Storage Act of 2015. The bill, if passed, would amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to allow the Department of Energy (DOE) to take title to the waste and contract with companies to store it.

This is good news for Waste Control Specialist see their blog [here](#).

**LANL running out of room to store its nuclear waste**

*Albuquerque Journal*

October 3, 2015

[LINK](#)

SANTA FE – While operations at the nation’s nuclear waste storage facility near Carlsbad remains shut down, Los Alamos National Laboratory is facing a narrowing time frame before it runs out of room to store its waste materials that are supposed to be sent to the closed facility.

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board says in a recent report that the Los Alamos lab will reach its maximum capacity for storing radioactive transuranic (TRU) waste sometime in the federal fiscal year that starts in October 2016.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant was shut down last year after a drum of TRU waste from Los Alamos breached at the storage facility, contaminating the underground storage site. TRU waste can include items like protective boots and gloves, machinery and sludge, as well as other materials from nuclear weapons work.

Federal officials initially said WIPP would reopen in March 2016, after cleanup work expected to cost a half-billion dollars. But the U.S. Department of Energy over the summer said the reopening was being indefinitely delayed due to safety concerns and equipment setbacks and that the cost would increase.

Now, U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz is saying WIPP “is on track to reopen by the end of next year,” according to

[Meeting](#)

November 18-20

New Orleans, LA

a report in the Weapons Complex Monitor. Moniz made the remarks at a DOE workshop last week in Arlington, Va., the WC Monitor reported,

“This has been a terribly costly situation to all of us, across the complex, because of the ripple effects of WIPP’s closure,” Moniz was quoted as saying. “We will not lose focus on the safety. In terms of our recovery, we’ve had some glitches, but we are on track for a 2016 startup of operations.”

The Los Alamos lab is building a new Transuranic Waste Facility, expected to be complete in February, at cost of \$99.2 million. It will add to existing waste storage capacity at the lab’s Area G and Technical Area 55.

But the new facility won’t solve the storage capacity issue for long, according to the report by the DNFSB, a federal government executive branch oversight agency.

LANL analysts “currently forecast the potential for transuranic waste accumulation to reach the site’s total storage capacity, including Area G, TA-55 and the yet to be completed Transuranic Waste Facility, in approximately fiscal year 2017,” says the DNFSB’s Los Alamos staff. Fiscal 2017, for the federal government, runs from October 2016 through September 2017.

Asked for comment on the DNFSB report, Toni Chiri, a spokeswoman for the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Los Alamos office, on Friday provided this statement: “We are evaluating all potential options to continue to provide safe storage of transuranic waste until WIPP is available for the disposal of LANL waste.”

The Los Alamos waste drum that popped open at WIPP contained an improperly packed mix of combustible materials, including nitrate salts and wheat-based cat litter. LANL was fined \$36.6 million over the accident by the state Environment Department, and DOE cut its fee to the lab’s contract operator by 90 percent, or \$57 million, for the “performance failure.”

The Aug. 14 DNFSB report said there had been a recent workshop on TRU management issues at Los Alamos amid “an extremely complex situation,” including treating nitrate salts, WIPP’s inability to accept waste, resolving safety issues and cleanup contract matters.

The “key drivers” of the forecasted deadlines for running out of storage space are “WIPP availability” and safety rules at Area G, the report states.

In a related development, the DOE announced recently that it had awarded a maximum two-year contract for environmental cleanup at Los Alamos to the same private consortium that runs the lab and failed to meet previous cleanup goals. The DOE had said late last year it would give the “bridge” contract to Los Alamos National Security LLC, which includes the Bechtel Corp., the University of California and two other companies, and has had the contract to run LANL since 2006.

Earlier in 2014, Energy Secretary Moniz had announced that he would pull cleanup operations from Los Alamos National Security, after the barrel of waste packed at Los Alamos leaked at WIPP.

But officials later said they would give LANS a short-term contract to avoid any disruption while cleanup responsibilities are shifted from the NNSA to DOE’s Office of Environmental Management. The new contract has a maximum value of \$309.8 million with a one-year base period and two six-month options.

Kotek received a B.S. from the University of Illinois and an M.B.A. from the University of Maryland.